Strategy Research Project

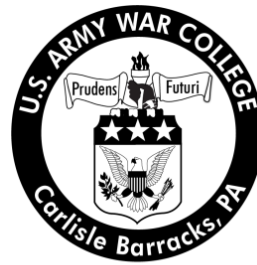# NATO's Relevance in the Twenty-First Century

by

Colonel John K. Jones
United States Army

United States Army War College
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NATO'S RELEVANCE IN THE TWENTY- FIRST CENTURY

by

Colonel John K. Jones
United States Army

Colonel Phillip Cuccia
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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The end of the cold war with Soviet Union in 1991 marked a beginning of a new era for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Left without a common enemy many wondered if NATO still had purpose or relevance. When the world entered into the 21st Century the entire environment had changed. The affects of Globalization, the threats of failed or failing states, non-state actors, the rise of global terrorism and the world's economic crisis dictated that NATO had to adapt. This research paper analyzes the threats the world faces today and the evolution of NATO into a global security mission. I maintain that NATO is as relevant (if not more so) in the 21st century than it was during the cold war.

NATO'S RELEVANCE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The end of World War II created a global environment of two world superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. These two Nations became super powers due to each possessing nuclear weapons capability. After the end of WWII, Europe was divided into West and East. Western Europe comprised those nations that were pre-dominantly democratic in nature. The Eastern European Nations were subjected to Soviet occupation and formed the basis of a communist Warsaw Pact alliance.

This situation also brought about an ideological struggle between Democracy in Western Europe and Communism in the Soviet Union and Warsaw pact Nations. This left Western Europe with the constant fear of communist aggression, and the United States containing communism. The end of World War II also left Western Europe in shambles and without capable military forces to repel an attack should the Soviet Union try to spread communism to Western Europe.

In order to keep the Soviet Union in check, the United States and Canada entered into an alliance with Western Europe in order to deter the threat and expansion of communist aggression, but also form a mutual defense among the new Alliance. This alliance was named the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO was officially formed 4 April 1949 consisting of Western European countries, Canada and the U.S. Its mechanism is outlined in Article V of the NATO Treaty that states:

> The parties agree that an Armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the united Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other parties, such an action as it deems necessary, including the

use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the (U.N.) Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.[1]

The purpose of the Alliance was to guard against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact Nations and establish an alliance that provided for the collective defense of Europe, and other treaty Nations. Throughout its inception in 1949 until the 1989 collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO and its member nations established static defenses across Western Europe through the use of multi-national conventional forces. NATO was backed by the nuclear capability the United States possessed.

This Strategic Research Paper will examine the effects of globalization on NATO, the threats that have merged in the 21st Century, the impact that NATO has had in recent operations, and the continued relevance of NATO in the 21st Century.

Former Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird pointed out in 1971 that reliance on nuclear capability alone is by no means sufficient to inhibit or deter aggression. He argued that nuclear capability alone is not enough to deter or defeat acts of aggression by Warsaw Pact nations. He also stressed that the alliance must also posses and posture conventional ground forces across Europe to deter and counter an attack by the Warsaw Pact nations through the use of superior Joint forces including a strong land, air and naval capability. He contended that these capabilities should not only be provided by the United States, but other alliance members as well.[2]

However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact forces, and the end of the cold war, NATO does not have the common traditional enemy or threat as in the past. It faces new challenges both internal and external to the Alliance.

<u>Globalization</u>

The strategic environment has changed drastically since the fall of the Soviet

Union and the end of the cold war. Globalization has made the world a smaller place

with the entwinement of the world economy, the increase of trade among more Nations,

increased speed of communications through the internet, ease of travel and a growing

interdependence among Nation States for defense of mutual National interests.

Globalization has increased the sharing of technology and boosted the world markets. It

also brings with it perils to the international community. NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept

proposed that the future remains hazardous across the spectrum of concerns and that

the Alliance must also consider the global impact of non-traditional threats such as acts

of terrorism, organized crime, failing states, and any disruption of the flow of resources

the world depends upon.[3] President Clinton's National Security Strategy Report in 1999

stated that:

> Globalization…also brings risks…weapons of mass destruction (WMD) terrorism, drug trafficking and other international crime are global concerns that transcend national borders. Other problems originating overseas – such as resource depletion, rapid population growth, environmental damage, new infectious diseases, pervasive corruption and uncontrolled refugee migration – have increasingly important implications for American security.[4]

This does not imply that Globalization is inherently a bad thing for the

international community. It must be remembered that along with Globalization comes

the "haves helping the "have nots." The instantaneous impact of the media brings crises

directly into the homes of people around the world. The effects of this are instant

awareness of a crisis, be it humanitarian relief, an overthrown regime that has left a

political vacuum in a country etc… This usually stirs the emotions of not only the civilian

populations of a Nation, but also forces action by the political arm of government.

It is this kind of attention that highlights the need for alliances. The benefits of the actors that participate to assist in a crisis, be it natural or manmade, can be of significant importance to an alliance member. As with any alliance some participant nations are better resourced or stronger militarily. Smaller nations contribute in order to be seen globally and to enhance their positive image. However with globalization, bad things do come with it such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), the spread of extremist ideology that uses violence and terrorism to impose beliefs of those who are vulnerable and cyber warfare. Globalization has made the world a smaller place and has provided greater access to populations by those meaning to do harm. In a speech Tony Blair made twenty-two days into the Kosovo War he stressed the fact that the need for interdependence is greater today than in the past which has constituted a new doctrine of international community. He maintains that the world is more mutually dependent, shared national interests are governed by international collaboration, and the alliance needs to define a doctrine to direct it for each international endeavor taken. He also stressed that the belief of community, partnership and cooperation are essential elements of the advancement of self interest.[5]

In the era of globalization nations still have self interests to protect. However with the speed that threats to national security occur across the globe, maintaining an alliance is crucial. The impact of the NATO alliance on these threats is of common interests to all members of the alliance. It is imperative to understand the impact a threat or action may have on one alliance member as it will most likely have an impact on another member or members of the alliance. A common defense of all member

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nations is critical, and the role that NATO plays in this age of globalization is as important in the 21st Century as it was during the Cold War.

The interdependence of world trade and communications networks, caused by globalization, may cause people to think that warfare is no longer possible. The cost of warfare on any society is great. It could be argued that today's political leaders could even rationalize the use war as an instrument of national policy. However recent history has proven that rationality is a matter of perspective in the cultural, political, and ideology of human beings. Saddam Hussein invaded two of six of Iraq's bordering nations and caused three wars. The result of Iraq's war with Iran killed nearly 250,000 Iraqis and half a million Iranians, while his wars against his own people killed more than 100,000, all for reasons he deemed as perfectly rational.[6] The increased need for the Alliance will only become greater in the 21st century due to threats and capabilities posed by state and non-state actors

Non-Proliferation

NATO will play a key role in the efforts to deter or stop the increased possibility of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Although the Cold War officially ended in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union and Warsaw pact, NATO will continue to play an important role in the 21st century. It is important to understand the strategic framework of today's environment and the threats that currently exist or may potentially exist in the years to come.

The United States National Security Strategy describes what the environment looks like today. It has been over twenty years since the end of the Cold War, the unprecedented acceleration of the free flow of information, people, goods and services has globalized nations. Interconnection has empowered individuals for good and bad,

and challenged international institutions that were mostly designed after World War II by policymakers who faced different challenges and global environments. Non-state actors now have a greater influence and pose a greater threat to the world. Economic growth has allowed some nations to rise out of poverty and become new centers of global influence. Nations are asserting themselves regionally and globally affecting the lives of U.S. citizens in the areas of safety and prosperity.[7]

 The threats outlined in the National Security Strategy are not all inclusive, nor are they relevant for just the United States, but the global community as well, including NATO. Among these threats, trends that have emerged in the post cold war era are actions by state and non-state actors, the potential for proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the increased need for NATO to participate in non-article V missions, and the current financial crisis that is sweeping across Europe and the United States.

 Many argue that a conventional war between states in Europe is not likely in the 21st century. However as recent as 1999 Yugoslavia attacked its own citizens in Kosovo, a province of Yugoslavia. Although this example is not a war among states, it did in fact draw U.S. forces and NATO forces into it. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia still remains a wild card in Europe. The argument can be made that Russia is still somewhat of a threat to Europe. It could emerge in the future to focus on regaining its former provinces in the belief that it is "freeing" Russian minorities in its border states from the ill-treatment they perceive they are receiving. The United States and its NATO allies could possibly confront the challenge of deterring Russia from doing so.[8]

The break-up of the Warsaw Pact gave birth to countries once controlled by the Soviet Union who now vie for, and for the most part, have their independence. However they possess their own agendas that may not be in accord with other former Warsaw Pact states which could create significant tension in the region and possibly armed conflict.

The proliferation of non-state actors in the 21st century will also continue to pose a threat. These are armed groups who act autonomously from a globally recognized government. They include but are not limited to, rebel groups, irregular armed groups, insurgents, dissident armed forces, guerillas, and freedom fighters. They are groups that will fight and die for a cause or ideology who normally use terrorism to advance their cause or belief with the goal to intimidate their target population to adapt their cause. An example of these groups is al-Qaida who launched terrorists attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, and the Taliban who controlled most of the population of Afghanistan, both acts leading to the wars in Iraq (for the belief it was harboring al' Qaeda training camps and providing financial aid) and Afghanistan.

The threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) will continue and potentially be greater in the 21st century. The threat of the use of, or acquisition of, chemical, biological, radioactive, and nuclear weapons by both state and non-state actors has been greatly enhanced by the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the desire of states and non-actors to obtain them, especially nuclear weapons technology. Chemical, biological and radioactive weapons are cheap and easy to build, making them more readily available to anybody. When the Warsaw Pact fell apart, Eastern bloc nations formerly under soviet control became independent. The stockpile of nuclear

weapons left behind in those countries is still unknown today. Those weapons are potentially available to sell, and also available for their use.

Some state or non-state actors may not view nuclear weapons as weapons of last resort. In a state whose culture and beliefs are vastly distinct from those of the United States, and whose political regime is unstable and or hostile may see the role of nuclear weapons in a different way than do Americans. Their gain of nuclear capability would disrupt the current balance of power of nuclear capable nations, and may also increase the possibility of their use. Once acquired, they have the potential to use them for short term gains due to the fact they view the use of these weapons differently than the United States.[9] These threats will most likely increase in the 21st century, and the role that NATO will play will be significant as more these weapons of mass destruction are considered for development or use by state or non-state actors.

Non- Article V Missions

The need for NATO to conduct Non-Article V missions will increase in the 21st century. Under Article V, NATO is described as being a collective defense of the alliance's members, and not to an aggressor. However with events in the 1990's such as NATO's operations in Bosnia and the Balkans, it became clear that NATO was beginning to expand its defensive role into one of crisis management.

This issue was discussed six years after the Strategic Concept of 1991 during a review to ensure that it was completely consistent with the Alliances new challenges and global security situation. They also stressed that the review and update if necessary, would confirm the commitment of the Alliance to its core function of collective defense and the importance of the transatlantic link to the United States and Canada. The terms of reference for this review was to be completed in time for NATO's

fiftieth anniversary summit. The Terms of Reference also should consider the internal and external adaptation of the Alliance and its assumption of new roles and missions such as crisis management, peace support operations and measures.[10]

While the political debate among members of the alliance continues on the validity of NATO conducting Non- article V missions, the military has moved forward. NATO's military authorities have developed a flexible and adaptable military structure and strategy necessary to conduct a large variety of military missions. A strategy document drafted in 1996 without clear political guidance changed NATO's long-standing emphasis on Alliance-wide collective defense operations and, sought to prepare NATO for a full spectrum of possible military missions that ranged from peace support and crisis management to regional collective defense. It was called MC 400/1, a new strategy that reflected the military authorities' conclusion that, from a strictly military perspective, there was no clear distinction between collective defense and crisis management operations, and that they both belong to a range of possible military missions.[11]

NATO has been increasing its role in Non- article V missions in regions that pose a threat to its member's interests or to provide humanitarian assistance. This trend has increased NATO's role to global regions outside of its original charter. In order to accomplish this, NATO has organized Combined Joint Task Force headquarters (CJTFs) that are capable of rapid deployment and providing appropriate command and control when needed.

The Combined Joint Task Force headquarters structure enables NATO to fulfill a full array of military activities and support the Western European Union if and when

European-only operations are desired. It also facilitates the deployment of coalitions of the willing (with or without partner country participation) when a NATO led action is deemed either inappropriate or unnecessary. As a result of this new structure, the range of options that NATO military authorities have now is considerably greater in both operational mission capability and area of deployment.[12] The increased willingness of NATO to participate in Non-Article V missions will demonstrate the resolve and unity of the Alliance rather than the world viewing one specific alliance member as the lead in operational and humanitarian efforts.

Non-Article V Missions – Darfur

Having looked at Non-Article V in general, we will now look at specific examples. In 2003 rebels in the Darfur region of Africa began attacking government entities with the claim that the entire region was being ignored by the Sudanese government. The Sudanese government and the pro-government Arab militias had been accused of war crimes against the black African population to a point close to genocide. World governments considered the situation in Darfur a humanitarian crisis, although they failed to stop the atrocities being committed.[13] At the request of the African Union (AU) in 2005, NATO agreed to provide assistance with airlift, logistics, training and other related support to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and deployed forces to Darfur based on humanitarian grounds. With the deployment of NATO forces, there was no mention of which article or which treaty was being used. Therefore, NATO and the AU did not formally relate to one another other than on the functional level.[14]

In 2007 NATO Defense Ministers reiterated the Alliance's commitment to Darfur and welcome the agreement of the Sudanese Government to an UN-AU hybrid mission in Darfur. In 2007 NATO Foreign Ministers expressed willingness to continue Alliance

support to the African Union in Darfur, following consultation and agreement with the United Nations and the African Union. At the Bucharest Summit in 2008, NATO stated its concern for the situation in Darfur and its readiness to support AU peacekeeping efforts in the region, following consultation with and the agreement of the UN and the AU. At the Strasburg Kehl Summit in 2009, NATO reiterated its concern for the situation in Darfur and Sudan. It stressed the principle of African ownership and stated that it was ready to consider further requests for support from the AU, to include capacity-building.[15] The participation of NATO in Darfur demonstrated that NATO is willing to participate not only in military Non-Article V missions, but in humanitarian missions as well.

Non-Article V Missions – Kosovo

Another example is demonstrated with the NATO experience in Kosovo. Once a province of the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo has a 90% ethnic Albanian population. It nevertheless holds an emotional place in Serbian nationalist tradition. As part of his nationalist program, Yugoslav President Milosevic revoked Kosovo's autonomous status, putting it under control of the Serbian-dominated Belgrade government. An armed ethnic Albanian resistance movement developed, led by the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army. The Belgrade government responded in early 1998 with counterinsurgency operations, with Yugoslav military ground units and aircraft destroying villages and executing civilians suspected of supporting the insurgents.

In 1998, NATO turned its attention to the Kosovo region due to the flow of refugees into Western Europe and Albania (itself destabilized by regional uprisings in 1997), and concerns about the conflict spilling over into the Former Yugoslav Republic

of Macedonia (FYROM). FYROM, an independent nation bordering Kosovo to the southeast, also has a large Albanian population alienated by its central government.[16]

NATO responded militarily by conducting Operation Allied Force which consisted of airstrikes in Serbia and Kosovo against Yugoslav President Milosevic forces. Thirteen NATO member nations conducted the seventy-eight day air campaign.

Yugoslavia accepted a peace proposal that was developed during a G-8 summit on May 6 1999. The Yugoslav government signed a military technical agreement with NATO on June 9 1999. By signing the agreement Yugoslavia agreed to withdraw all of its forces from Kosovo and turn over military control of the province over to NATO's peacekeeping forces (KFOR). The peace settlement was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 on 10 June 1999. The peacekeeping force was named Operation Joint Guardian and totaled about 30,000 KFOR troops in Kosovo, the United States provided about 2,500 in Kosovo and 1,000 troops in near-by countries that provide support to operations in both Kosovo and Bosnia.[17]

The actions taken by NATO forces in Kosovo are an example of the importance of non-article V missions that NATO has expanded to executing. This recent trend leads toward increasing NATO's relevance in the 21st Century.

Non-Article V Missions – Iraq

NATO's increasing willingness to participate in Non-Article V missions was demonstrated again in Iraq. The United States invasion of Iraq in 2003 under the auspices of Saddam Hussein's government owning weapons of mass destruction and providing funding and safe havens for terrorist's organizations was not a NATO mission. The coalition formed by the United States consisted of Nations willing to contribute to the war, not necessarily all of NATO. Although some of the 'coalition of the willing" were

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members of NATO, such as Great Britain, most were of former soviet Eastern bloc Nations.

After the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime, it was not until 2004 that NATO formally became involved in Iraq. On 24 June 2004 the NATO Secretary General received a letter from the interim Iraqi Prime Minister Ilyad Allawi that requested NATO support to his newly formed government by providing training and other forms of technical assistance. At a Summit meeting in Istanbul on 28 June 2004, sovereignty was formally transferred to an Interim Iraqi government. NATO leaders agreed to assist Iraq with the training of its security forces and encouraged other Alliance members to contribute.[18]

On 22 September 2004, based on the mission's recommendations, the North Atlantic Council agreed to expand NATO's assistance, including establishing a NATO-supported Iraqi Training, Education and Doctrine Center in Iraq. In November 2004, NATO's military authorities prepared a detailed concept of operations for the expanded assistance, including the rules of engagement for force protection.[19]

NATO Foreign Ministers authorized the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to begin the next stage of the mission on 9 December 2004. The activation order for this next stage was given by SACEUR on 16 December 2004. It allowed the deployment of 300 additional staff, trainers, support staff, and a significant increase in the existing training and mentoring given to mid- and senior-level personnel from the Iraqi Security Forces. The Activation order also changed the name of the operation from NATO Training Implementation Mission to NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I).[20]

The NATO training mission in Iraq focused on advising and training the Iraqi police force, the Iraqi leadership in the Prime Minister's National Operations center, the Minister of Defense's joint Operations Center and the Minister of Interior's National Command Center. The training and advising also consisted of helping with the training of Officer training and education for both mid to senior level Officers. Training was also conducted outside of Iraq at the NATO Centers of Excellence throughout Europe. However an agreement signed by NATO and the Government of the Republic of Iraq in 2009 providing legal protection for NATO to continue to train Iraqi forces until the end of 2011 was not extended and on 31 December 2011 NTM-I was withdrew from Iraq. Although the mission was withdrawn, the fact that NATO was involved with the training mission again shows a trend toward increasing NATO involvement and hence increasing its relevance in the 21st century.

Non-Article V Missions – Afghanistan

NATO also rose to the occasion to participate in Non-Article V missions when it deployed forces to Afghanistan. The NATO led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386 on December 20, 2001. The ISAF mission was originally led by the United States and was initially limited to Kabul. NATO took over command of ISAF in Afghanistan in August 2003. The ISAF mission consists of troops from forty-two countries, with the twenty-eight NATO members providing most of the force. On September 23, 2008 the Security Council passed the currently governing resolution, Res. 1883. Under the resolution NATO provides security, law and order, promotes governance and development, assists in reforming the justice system, trains a national police force and army, provides

security for elections, and provides assistance to local efforts to address the narcotics industry.[21]

Unity of purpose in Afghanistan has been maintained by NATO. The common desire of NATO allies to stabilize the country in order to prevent its return to a terrorist state has proven that ISAF can help build a state that is more stable and no longer provides a source of international terrorism.

The United States and its NATO allies have greater unity of purpose in Afghanistan for now. Allies believe that the success of the mission is a test of the United States' ability and commitment to lead NATO, even if some allies do not always agree with all elements of U.S. policy in Afghanistan. The results of NATO's efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and U.S. leadership of that effort may ultimately affect the cohesiveness of the alliance and the ability of the United States to shape NATO's future.[22]

The future involvement of the United States and its NATO allies has come into question recently. On 1 February 2012, the United States Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced that the United Sates seeks to end combat missions against the Taliban and other terrorist groups in 2013 and transition into a training and advisory role. This timetable is ahead of what members of the NATO alliance agreed to during the Lisbon summit in November 2010 that set a timetable for such a change in mission to the end of 2014. Not all of the NATO alliance members agree with this accelerated strategy. A spokesman for the United States administration stressed however that "until the leaders come together…and make a final decision at their scheduled May summit in Chicago, nothing is final."[23] NATO's continued willingness to participate in Non-Article V missions will continue to increase its relevance in the 21st century.

The world is currently facing a financial crisis of unprecedented proportions. Global markets are down, unemployment is at the highest in decades, home foreclosures are rampant and nation's debts have swelled to a point where National defense may be affected. The effects of the crisis are not new. For at least three years NATO members have not been able to provide their economic share or percentage of a country's gross domestic product agreed by member Nations. The ability of Nations to fill posts they own in the NATO Peacetime Establishment (NATO's manning document) is dwindling to the point that organizational staffs and training centers within NATO are operating at about a sixty percent fill rate.

The impact of this crisis is being felt among all NATO members and affecting military readiness within the alliance by countries reducing the size of their militaries. The United States Department of Defense (DoD) announced that in order to meet the requirements and to conform to the 2011 Budget Control Act's requirement to it would have to reduce Defense Department future expenditures by approximately $487 billion over the next ten years or $259 billion over the next five years.[24] The reduction of the United States defense budget will affect all branches of the United States Military.

However the Department of Defense also stated that the United States will continue to invest in its responsibilities to the NATO alliance. It will require adjusting the posture of land forces in Europe in concert with overall Army transformation including eliminating two heavy brigades and one air wing currently stationed in Europe. The Department of Defense maintains that it will meet its NATO Article V commitments and ensure interoperability with allied forces by allocating a U.S based brigade to the NATO

Response Force, and rotate U.S. based units to Europe for training and exercises. The United States will also station ballistic missile defense ships in Rota, Spain.[25]

The Department of Defense plan will also reduce the size of the active Army from a post 9/11 peak of 570,000 to 490,000 and eliminate eight Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) from the existing force structure.[26]

These decisions by the Department of Defense may not be looked upon favorably by European NATO members. Ian Brzezinski, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council think tank in Washington and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of defense for Europe and NATO Policy, pointed out that the European allies would be looking for the Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to explain what the new U.S. force posture in Europe would mean for the trans-Atlantic alliance. To some European allies the reduction of U.S. forces in Europe may be seen as a forcing function of the United States to make its European allies contribute more money and military forces to NATO for Europe's' own self defense.

His major concerns with the Department of Defense plans for a reduced United States footprint in Europe and what impacts it will have on the United States' commitment to NATO and its Article V responsibilities. He also noted concerns by the U.S. European Command, including the commander, Admiral James Stavridis, who told Congress the U.S. military might not be able to fulfill its treaty obligations with fewer than four Army combat brigades.[27] It will be seen how NATO reacts to this new Defense Budget and posture when President Obama hosts a summit of NATO leaders in Chicago, Illinois in May 2012. Alliance members face internal financial problems. Their ability to maintain their military forces, at the levels they have been in the last ten years,

is dwindling. This results in force structure reductions across the alliance, thus illustrating that all alliance members need each other to offset these reductions in capabilities to meet the demands of the 21st century.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The relevancy of NATO in the 21st Century cannot be overstated. The end of the cold war marked a new era for the NATO alliance. It has evolved from a collective defense of alliance members to a collective security of alliance members. Although its core function for the common defense of alliance members remains, the evolution or expansion to include collective security for the Alliance has played a critical role in countering the threats of the 21 Century. As demonstrated, the ever increasing use of Non-Article V NATO employments indicates the increasing relevance of NATO in the 21st century.

The state of the global economy, conventional and asymmetric threats faced today have caused the United States and its NATO allies to realize that we need each other more in the 21st Century than ever before. No one Nation can afford to "go it alone" and meet its national security objectives. The reduction of defense expenditures by the United States and its NATO allies will cause them both to examine how to best balance their force requirements and ensure that they are complimentary.

By enabling NATO allies and partner Nations, the United States has been more effective in meeting its military and political objectives. This trend will continue well into the 21st century as militaries within the NATO alliance become smaller, therefore increasing dependence between NATO allies and the United States. This clearly demonstrates the increased relevance of NATO in the 21st Century.

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